

In the Claims

1. (currently amended) Apparatus for treating tissue specimens by immersion in a liquid, the apparatus comprising a first structure providing a chamber for holding the liquid, and a second structure including holding means for releasably holding the specimens, the first and second structures being relatively moveable in a direction having a vertical component between a first position in which the holding means are relatively close to the chamber and in which the second structure closes the top of the chamber to enable the specimens to be immersed in the liquid whilst the latter is protected from the environment, and a second position in which the holding means are relatively distant from the chamber to enable the specimens to be loaded onto or unloaded from the holding means, and further in which the chamber is in the form of an annular trough; the holding means hold the specimens so that the latter depend from the holding means at angularly spaced positions around a circle; and the second structure includes a lid which acts to close the chamber in the first position and the underside of which carries the holding means.

2. (original) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first structure is stationary and the second structure is shiftable vertically with respect to the first structure.

3. (original) Apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the holding means include magnets to enable specimens, each provided with a metal mount, to be detachably retained on the second structure by magnetic attraction.

4-6. (cancelled)

7. (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 1~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the second structure is rotatably moveable around a central vertical

axis, enabling specimens to be loaded onto and unloaded from the second structure at a chosen position alongside the apparatus, either by a robotic arm or a human hand.

8. (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 1 any of the preceding claims, wherein the apparatus has the facility to change the liquid when in the first position, enabling the specimens to be treated by different liquids in a succession of treatment stages, whilst retaining the chamber closed.

9-12. (cancelled).